

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 ACDA-12 OMB-01
TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/100 W

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P 271431Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9354
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: ADS (DECONTROL ON RECEIPT)
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: SMITH EXPRESSES PESSIMISM ON SETTLEMENT PLANS

REF: PRETORIA 5627

1. SUMMARY: IN TELEVISED DISCUSSION, PM SMITH EXPRESSED
PESSIMISM ON ANGOL-RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT PLAN. HE SAID THAT
HE STILL SAW AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE IF
CURRENT INITIATIVE FAILED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCT. 23, SMITH GAVE A TV/RADIO INTERVIEW IN
SALISBURY. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE INTERVIEW, AS GIVEN TO
US BY THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE IN SALISBURY, JEREMY
VARCOE, FOLLOW: QUOTE:

A) IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SAID THAT THE LAW AND ORDER
ARRANGEMENTS WERE NOT NEGOTIABLE BEYOND THE TERMS OF
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THEIR STATEMENT OF 1 SEPTEMBER, THEN THE PLAN COULD BE
A NON-STARTER. THE SECURITY FORCES COULD NOT BE
DISMANTLED.

B) MR. SMITH WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FIRST STEP.
HE REGARDED LORD CARVER'S TASK OF ARRANGING A CEASEFIRE
AS "ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE". ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT
SET A TIME LIMIT FOR JUDGING THE BRITISH INITIATIVE, IT

SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GAIN AN INDICATION OF THE OUTCOME BY THE END OF A WEEK OF DISCUSSIONS.

C) SMITH MUCH PREFERRED A HIGHLY QUALIFIED FRANCHISE, THOUGH HE WOULD INSTEAD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER SAFEGUARDS FOR WHITES WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION. ENOUGH CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES FOR WHITES WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED BEFORE THERE COULD BE A CEASEFIRE. NO GOVERNMENT COULD BE EXPECTED TO DISSOLVE ITSELF UNTIL IT KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WOULD SUCCEED IT.

D) MR. SMITH HAD NOT CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE. HE, LIKE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, WAS ONLY AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT PLAN. THE INTERNAL LEADERS INCLUDING CHIEF CHIRAU HAD 85 PERCENT POPULAR SUPPORT AND MR. SMITH BELIVED THAT IF THERE WERE A GENUINE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, IT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE EXTERNALLY RECOGNIZED. MR. SMITH SAID HE COULD WORK WITH ANY AFRICAN MOVEMENT PROVIDED THEY RENOUNCED TERRORISM AND AGREED TO WORK CONSTITUTIONALLY. NKOMO HAD ONLY 15 PERCENT SUPPORT AND THIS COULD BE DISREGARDED. ANY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PERMITTED TO SEND OBSERVERS TO CHECK THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE FAIR.

E) THE MAIN STUMBLING BLOCK AT PRESENT WAS THE TOTAL SUPPORT FOR THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BY THE FRONTLINE STATES. SMITH THOUGHT THE BRITISH HAD PLAYED ALONG WITH THE FLS AND THAT THIS ACCOUNTED FOR THE CHANGE IN STANCE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND VISITS BY DR. OWEN.
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F) MR. SMITH HOPED LORD CARVER'S VISIT WOULD NOT BE MERELY EXPLORATORY. IF THE NATIONALISTS AGREED TO STOP FIGHTING, SO WOULD THE RHODESIANS. LORD CARVER WOULD, DESPITE THE DIFFICULTY OF HIS TASK, HAVE THE UTMOST CO-OPERATION FROM THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT. MR. SMITH WOULD AGREE TO A SAFE RETURN POLICY FOR GUERRILLAS IF THIS WAS A NECESSARY PART OF A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT.

G) ASKED ABOUT SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR RHODESIA IN THE EVENT OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND IF THE FIGHTING CONTINUED, SMITH DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY BUT SAID RHODESIANS HAD ALWAYS ENJOYED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND THAT THIS WOULD CONTINUE. UNQUOTE.

3. LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE CARRIED SUBSTANTIVELY SAME POINTS EXCEPT THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF LAST POINT ON SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT.
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